



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND**

MICHAEL KNAPP

November 17, 2009

Ms. Shirley Brandman  
President, Montgomery County Board of Education  
Carver Educational Services  
Center, Room 123  
850 Hungerford Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear President Brandman:

As you are no doubt aware, the Superintendent, as part of his FY2010 proposal in the capital budget request—which you will be considering in the coming weeks—has recommended the closure of Monocacy Elementary School in the Poolesville and Barnesville regions of the Upcounty. As the County Councilmember representing the Monocacy Elementary School community, I wanted to bring their concerns—and mine—to your attention, especially as the Board will be discussing this matter this week.

Monocacy Elementary serves a small, close knit community in the Agricultural Reserve—a community with spectacular views of Sugarloaf mountain, and where traffic is more likely to get backed up behind a combine than a FedEx truck. I held a meeting in the community several weeks ago to discuss the Board's recommendation—and as you can imagine, the news of this recommended closure has rocked the area, which fears its sense of community is being slowly pulled apart in the name of economy.

I know, and appreciate, that the Board of Education is properly following all its formal procedures for a school closing. This is, however, more than a school closure. In a very real sense, this is the equivalent of a boundary change for students and families at Monocacy Elementary—and boundary changes rightly take time. I believe we need to ensure the community is given the time it needs to discuss its options with the Board of Education, determine the impact of the closure on its community, and determine what options, if any, are available. I strongly encourage the Board to work with the Monocacy community to this end.

As part of its consideration, I would also appreciate the Superintendent providing a more detailed explanation of the cost analysis that was done to determine the savings generated by Monocacy's closure. Because cost is the driving factor in the decision to close the

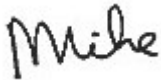
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school, I believe both the Board and the Council would be better served by more information.

I understand that this is a recommendation that the Superintendent has not made lightly. It is obvious that we continue to face many challenges when it comes to the county's budget, especially as our revenues drop and student enrollment continues to climb. There are many tough decisions to be made—but I want to ensure that these decisions are made on the best available information, and with the fullest input from the affected communities.

If I can provide you with further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

Mike Knapp  
Councilmember, District 2